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Gary & Diana Ditto's Newsletter

Spring 2015

Villages of Kensington “Neighbors Helping Neighbors”



The “Villages of Kensington,” an intergenerational network of neighbors helping neighbors, is being established to enhance the quality of life for all members of our community.

Inspired by models already thriving in many communities, this network will focus on supporting senior residents of the community who choose to age-in-place in their homes.

Villages of Kensington will also extend its services to younger neighbors, many of whom face the challenge of balancing the demands of child-rearing and work.

The objective is to create a sustainable organization that provides services and access through a network of volunteers, in collaboration with existing resources and community organizations.

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“We are beginning with the Rock Creek Hills (RCH) and Kensington Heights (KH) neighborhoods,” says Suzanne Bowler, “with plans to expand eventually to other Kensington neighborhoods.”

“Villages” are based on community needs. They typically include transportation, home repairs, social and educational activities, and help with access to affordable services. Villages are membership-driven, grass-roots organizations.

Villages focus on building social connections and organize events that are of interest to its community such as book clubs, walking groups, knitting clubs, guest speaker events, group outings and so much more.

The Washington area is leading the country in the establishment of Villages, according to the Village to Village Network (www.vtvnetwork.org), a national umbrella organization. From 5 Villages in 2010, currently 40 Villages are running or in development in our region.

Beginnings in the Kensington Area

Suzanne Bowler of Rock Creek Hills heard about “Villages” when lunching with friends on a hot summer day. Her friends were both enthusiastic Village volunteers—one with a Bethesda Village, and the other with “Chevy Chase at Home,” a village that has been up and running for 5 years.

As an anthropologist, Suzanne has studied traditional societies in which people are well connected, and the Village concept of neighbor helping neighbor spoke to her.

Last September, she and a small group of neighbors got together to discuss forming a Village in Rock Creek Hills based on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors.

Since then, 34 people have expressed a keen interest and have asked to be kept informed. A number of them indicated that they would like to volunteer when the Village is “up and running.”

Donna Savage of Kensington Heights and her husband very much want to age-in-place in their own home. She notes, “Lots of neighbors are already helping each other in Kensington. Villages of Kensington can strengthen that.”

This year, Rock Creek Hills and Kensington Heights joined forces and formed a Steering Committee to begin the challenging work of developing a Village.

Benefits and Steps

A recent study sponsored by the School of Social Work at the University of California at Berkeley shows that Villages can provide significant benefits to both their members and volunteers, as well as to the community organizations with which they collaborate.

One of their most important benefits of Villages is reducing the social isolation of people living alone. Living alone with minimal social contact has been linked to depression and other health problems.

For example, some Villages have partnered with local hospitals, in order to help discharged patients make a full recovery at home instead of being re-admitted to the hospital. Village volunteers can check in on them, bring meals, make sure they are taking their medicine, and take them for post-hospital doctor visits.

Montgomery County is active in the Village movement, with 13 Villages in operation and others being developed. These Villages receive extensive help and encouragement from Pazit Aviv, the Montgomery County Village Coordinator. Thanks to her help, Villages of Kensington now has the expert assistance of a lawyer and marketing consultant.

Founding Board members of successful Villages like Chevy Chase at Home and Silver Spring are offering helpful advice to the Kensington-area committee. The local Washington Area Villages Exchange and the national Village to Village Network are also great resources.

Every new Village starts with a vision and a dedicated core of individuals ready and willing to make that vision a reality. There is no “cookie-cutter” model for Villages. Each Village is unique and reflects the character, interests, and needs of the community that creates it.

“Our mission is to create an intergenerational and sustainable network of neighbors helping neighbors,” writes Suzanne Bowler. “We seek to enhance the quality of life of people of all ages in our communities through volunteer-provided services, referrals to services we cannot provide, social gatherings, and educational events, to bring people together and build new friendships.”

Survey Seeks Community Input

“A survey recently went to residents in both Rock Creek Hills and Kensington Heights,” reports Donna Savage, “to assess the level of interest. We will find out what kinds of services residents would like to receive or to provide to their neighbors, and who would like to help us to develop our Village. Specifically, we need volunteer help with website development, graphics, non-profit management, fund-raising, and finance.”

In sum, the “Villages of Kensington” will serve all members of the community. As Suzanne Bowler says, “We will draw on the examples of intergenerational Villages like Bannockburn and some neighborhood Villages in Takoma Park. While some Villages have paid staff in addition to volunteers and charge a membership fee, other Villages are all-volunteer and have no fee. We have yet to decide which approach is most feasible, and will not make any decision without consulting you, the community members.”

“Also, we hope to include other interested Kensington communities, but can only do so after we’ve established an appropriate organizational and operational infrastructure.”

“Meanwhile, please let us know if you’d like to be kept informed on our progress and become involved, either during our development or when we’re ‘up and running.’

“Remember that “Villages of Kensington” is your Village. So let us know what you’d like us to offer, and how you’d like to become involved in our exciting venture!”

To find out more and get involved, see the box on the next page.



Invitation:

Take Part in the Survey for Villages of Kensington

If you live in Rock Creek Hills or Kensington Heights, you can help the Villages of Kensington reflect the wishes and interests of these two communities by letting us know what types of services and social and educational activities would be most beneficial for you and your family. We'd also like to know if you would be interested in volunteering to assist in some of these activities. Please complete the appropriate survey at your earliest convenience:

Rock Creek Hills survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Q8C5ZZP>

Kensington Heights survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VYQNPJY>

If you know someone who would like to fill out a survey who does not have a computer or does not wish to receive e-mails, let us know and we will send them the survey via U.S. mail.

Get Involved

If you'd like to help plan this exciting new initiative, learn more about it, get on the e-mail list for updates, or have any questions at all, please contact Suzanne Bowler, Rock Creek Hills (suzannebowler@verizon.net; 301-946-0990), or Donna Savage, Kensington Heights (DonnaRSavage@gmail.com; 301-942-2447).

Thank you!

Kensington Historical Society Meetings:

Tuesday, April 28th, Chris and Ed Hyland from the Bantrak Club will have a small train and trolley display and will tell stories related to the trolleys and the history of the Kensington Trolley line.

MAKE MORE NOYES! Learn more about the history of the Noyes Library, get an update on the progress of the rehabilitation and find out what a Penny Theater is! Check www.kensingtonhistory.org for the new meeting date.

All are welcome! Meetings are held at the Town Hall at 3710 Mitchell. Enjoy coffee and cookies at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Program at 7:30 p.m. and a brief business meeting.

E-Mail Updates from The Ditto Group—

Sign up for either or both of these updates:

- Our Monthly Sold Reports, sent via e-mail
- Our weekly "Open House" e-mail

You choose what to sign up for and you can always unsubscribe. Sign up on our home page: www.thedittogroup.com.

For dates and news of more events, be sure to visit the Community Activities Calendar on the web site:

www.thedittogroup.com

Gary and Diana Ditto's Newsletter welcomes ideas and news items from community members. Many thanks to Suzanne Bowler, Donna Savage and Don Jahn. The editor is Antoinette Kranenburg of Kensington, assisted by Cherry Wunderlich.

Raise a Ruckus Read-a-thon!

Help us **Make More Noyes** by participating in the "Raise a Ruckus Read-a-thon!"

Children of all ages will help launch the campaign to renovate the Noyes Library with a reading program. The spring read-a-thon's finale on April 25, 2015, at Kensington Town Hall, will celebrate participants.

All pre-readers, early readers, and advanced readers are invited to sign up and collect pledges for donations to Noyes for pages they read.

More details at the Noyes Library and www.noyeslibraryfoundation.org. So get ready to read!



New Expanded Hours at Noyes:

Now open Wednesdays 1 to 8 p.m. and Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Come Celebrate the International Day of the Book

Sunday, April 26, 2015, 11a.m. - 4 p.m.

Howard Avenue, Old Town Kensington

Rain or Shine

Live music, author readings, open mic, activities for children and adults, storytellers, ...and books, books, books! All activities are free, rain or shine. Live music by the Nighthawks, the Rock-a-Sonics and Eli August and the Abandoned Buildings; Children's entertainer The Great Zucchini! and much more.

Guest Speakers:

- **Martin Goldsmith**, author of *Alex's Wake*, radio host and classical music programmer, who lives in Kensington
- **Chef Jonathan Bardzik** cook, author and storyteller from Washington, DC.

• **Major General Oleg Danilovich Kalugin**, KGB (Ret.) author of *Spymaster*

Check www.dayofthebook.com for the latest information.

Second Annual Kensington Car Show

April 12, 2015 (Rain Date April 19)

10 a.m. – 2 p.m. • Howard Avenue

<http://www.kensingtoncarshow.com>

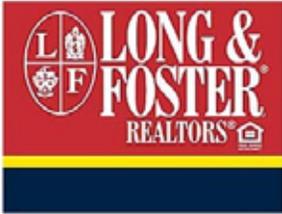
Kensington Arts Theatre presents

Chess

Kensington Town Hall / Armory
3710 Mitchell Street

The ancient game is a metaphor for romantic rivalries, competitive gamesmanship, superpower politics, and international intrigues. From Bangkok to Budapest, the players, lovers, politicians, and spies manipulate and are manipulated to the pulse of a monumental rock score.

Performances are May 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30. Friday & Saturday at 8:15 p.m., Sunday at 3:00 p.m. Tickets and more information at www.katonline.org.



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**4312 Glenridge Street
Kensington/Ch Ch View
FOR SALE - \$ 929,000**



**5355 Strathmore Avenue
Kensington/Strathmore Place
FOR SALE - \$ 799,000**



**4502 Franklin Street
Kensington/Parkwood
FOR SALE - \$ 799,000**



**4106 Knowles Avenue
Kensington/ Warners Addition
FOR SALE - \$ 549,000**



**12306 Greenhill Drive
Silver Spring/Springbrook
FOR SALE - \$ 465,000**



**11100 Kensington Blvd
Kensington/North Kensington
FOR SALE - \$ 445,000**



**4001 Saul Road
Kensington/Ch Ch View
UNDER CONTRACT: List Price - \$ 595,000**